

John C. Carrington, P.E.  
Director of Public Works/Town Engineer

Testimony in Support of Governor's Bill #6664, Sec. 1 of An Act Managing Waste and  
Creating a Waste Authority

To: Honored Co-Chairs Senator Lopes and Representative Gresko, Vice Chairs Senator Hochadel and Representative Palm, Ranking Members Senator Harding and Representative Callahan, Distinguished Members of the Environment Committee

Thank you for the opportunity to share the Town of Mansfield's **support** for the Governor's Bill #6664, Sec. 1 of An Act Managing Waste and Creating a Waste Authority. I am the Recycling Coordinator for the Town of Mansfield, a town that passed a resolution in 2020 in support of the goals of the federal Break Free from Plastic Pollution Act. This Act, co-authored by US Senator Udall and US Representative Lowenthal, outlined a comprehensive approach to reducing packaging waste, including support for packaging EPR. EPR for packaging is one important step that our State can take to address our solid waste crisis. Here's why I urge you to support it.

*Recycling is stagnant; residents are confused*

The Town has been implementing a pay-as-you-throw trash service since 1990 to reduce the amount of residential per capita waste in part by boosting the incentive to recycle. Pay-as-you-throw works. Mansfield has the second lowest per capita waste generation in Connecticut. Yet recycling has been stagnant for many years. Residents are CONFUSED! They understand that cardboard, newspaper, cans and glass bottles are recyclable, but are mystified about which plastics and multi-material items to put in the recycle bin. A municipal budget for recycling education cannot compete with misleading packaging labels and evolving packaging changes. A packaging EPR law will foster increased recycling rates by creating sustainable funding for resident education and infrastructure upgrades. Consistent clear marketing and outreach means less confusion, which will translate into increased capture of recyclables and less contamination. Less contamination means added value to recycle commodities and better quality post-consumer products.

*Recycling costs are rising*

In Mansfield, user fees fund multi-family and single family collection and transfer station operations. Until 2020 we could count on the sale of single-stream recycling to contribute revenue for these operations. That changed with the 2020 contract. The Town now pays for single-stream recyclables. When this single-stream recycle contract ends, we anticipate another increase in cost. Enacting this bill will provide financial relief in two ways. First, Mansfield will be reimbursed for its recycling related costs at the transfer station and for curbside collection. We estimate our costs at about \$300,000 per year. Second, we should see a reduction in waste. CT DEEP estimates that Connecticut's waste will reduce by about 190,000 tons per year with improved recycling through a packaging EPR law. This is welcome news because we estimate a 60% increase in solid waste disposal costs when our contract ends this summer.

*EPR is a proven system*

EPR laws internalize the cost of product end-of-life management. It shifts responsibility from a municipality to the product designer. It is a fair and proven workable method of product management. For this reason, packaging EPR is recognized as one of the ways to meet the goals of the Comprehensive Materials

Management Strategy (CMMS), which requires the diversion and/or recycling of at least 60% of the solid waste generated in the state by 2024. For decades, packaging EPR has successfully existed around the globe, increasing the amount of materials captured for recycling. Like other Connecticut municipalities, Mansfield enjoys the benefits of existing EPR programs. Residents bring their electronics, mercury thermostats, paint and mattresses to the Transfer Station for recycling. Before EPR, recycling outlets did not exist for paint and mattresses. With EPR, paint and mattresses are being recycled.

It is surprising the number of misconceptions that are circulating about packaging EPR. One is that it will increase the cost of consumer goods, disproportionately affecting disadvantaged communities. This argument has no basis in fact. An RRS study using real time data has shown that there is no link between consumer prices and packaging EPR.

Please support the packaging EPR bill. Municipalities need relief from the end-of-life costs of products that we have no control over.

Sincerely,

Virginia Walton  
Mansfield Recycling Coordinator